

If You are Nuts About Health, Try the Top 6 Healthiest Nuts

by www.SixWise.com

Many people were scared away from nuts during the low-fat craze of the last few decades, but now nuts are making a comeback. Nuts are excellent sources of protein, minerals, "good" monounsaturated fats and other nutrients, and they're good for the heart.

A study conducted by Loma Linda University in California that involved 31,000 Seventh Day Adventists found that eating nuts lowered the risk of heart disease and helped participants to keep their weight down. Other large-scale studies, including the Physician's Health Study, the Iowa Women's Health Study and the Harvard Nurses Health Study, also found that eating nuts lowered heart disease risk. Other studies have shown that nuts help lower bad "LDL" cholesterol.

In fact, in July 2003, the FDA approved the following health claim for nut package labels:

"Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of some nuts, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease."

It only takes a small handful of nuts to satisfy hunger (and help you stay full longer), and there are many varieties to choose from. Here are six of the healthiest.



1. Walnuts

When it comes to nuts, the walnut is the king. It's a great source of the healthy omega-3 essential fatty acids, which have been found to protect the heart, promote better cognitive function, and provide anti-inflammatory benefits for asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, eczema and psoriasis.

Walnuts also contain the antioxidant compound [ellagic acid](#), which is known to fight cancer and support the immune system. But that's not all--in a study in the August 2003 issue of Phytochemistry, **researchers identified 16 polyphenols in walnuts, including three new tannins, with antioxidant activity so powerful they described it as "remarkable."**

Walnuts are incredibly healthy for the heart. A study in the April 2004 issue of Circulation found that when walnuts were substituted for about one-third of the calories supplied by olives and other monounsaturated fats in the Mediterranean diet:

- Total cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol were reduced
- The elasticity of the arteries increased by 64 percent
- Levels of vascular cell adhesion molecules, which play a major role in the development of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), were reduced

2. Almonds

Just a quarter cup of almonds contains nearly 25 percent of your needed daily value of the important nutrient magnesium, plus is rich in potassium, manganese, copper, the antioxidants vitamin E and selenium, and calcium. In fact, a quarter cup of almonds has almost as much calcium as a quarter cup of milk.

They're also great for the colon. An animal study on the effects of almonds on colon cancer found that animals (which were exposed to a colon-cancer-causing agent) given whole almonds had fewer signs of colon cancer than animals given almond oil or no almonds. Researchers suspect the benefit may be due to almonds' high fiber content.

Plus, almonds are one of the best nuts for lowering cholesterol because 70 percent of the fat they contain is the healthy monounsaturated variety, which has been shown to help clear arteries.



3. Cashews



Cashews are lower in fat than most nuts, and 65 percent of this fat is unsaturated fatty acids. Of this, 90 percent is oleic acid, the heart-healthy fat found in olive oil.

Plus, cashews are rich in copper, magnesium, zinc, iron and biotin.

4. Pecans

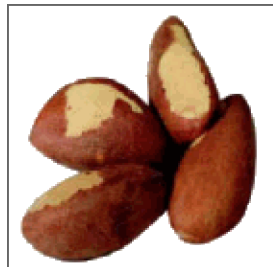
Pecans are an excellent source of over 19 vitamins and minerals including vitamins E and A, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, copper, phosphorus, potassium, manganese, several B vitamins and zinc.

Plus, according to Sue Taylor, R.D., director of nutrition communication for the National Pecan Shellers Association, "Recent clinical research studies evaluating the impact of pecans on serum cholesterol have found pecans can significantly help lower blood cholesterol when consumed as part of a heart-healthy diet."

In fact, a study from New Mexico State University found that eating 3/4 cup of pecans a day may significantly lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and help to clear the arteries.



5. Brazil Nuts



These nuts are extremely nutrient-rich and contain protein, copper, niacin, magnesium, fiber, vitamin E and selenium. Selenium is a powerful antioxidant that works to neutralize dangerous free radicals. A study at the University of Illinois even found that the high amounts of selenium in Brazil nuts may help prevent breast cancer.

6. Macadamia Nuts

These nuts are high in protein, fiber, healthy monounsaturated fats, potassium and magnesium. And, a study done at Hawaii University found that people who had added macadamia nuts to their diets for just one month had total cholesterol levels of 191, compared to 201 for those eating the typical American diet. The largest change was found in the LDL (bad) cholesterol.



A Little Goes a Long Way

The key with nuts is simply not to overeat them. They are highly concentrated in both their calories and their nutrients, so you only need a small handful at a time. Eating a variety of nuts appears to be the best way to get all the different benefits each nut has to offer.

Recommended Reading

[Those Who Don't Diet are Better at Improving Health Than Those Who Do Diet](#)

[Fiber: Everything You Need to Know, Including the Best Fiber Sources, to Fight Heart Disease, Obesity, Diabetes and More](#)

Sources

[The World's Healthiest Foods](#)

[AskMen.com The Health Benefits of Nuts](#)

[Her Sports Magazine](#)

[Health Benefits of Nuts](#)

[Pecans. So Good, so Good for You](#)

[The Snack That can Benefit Your Health](#)

[Macadamia Nuts in the Diet can Lower Cholesterol](#)

2/1/2011

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Joanie Simmons Jan 29

I have always loved nuts, but I shall make sure I have some each day, macademia nuts are my favourite.

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Bob Calvert Jan 25

I'm nuts about nuts

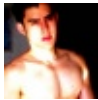
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Mark Eastvold Jan 25

best are walnuts, huh well I will just have to give them all a try.

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Chad Jariya Jan 24

heck! i've been having hazelnuts every morning for so long and they dont even seem to be worth being written about !

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Craig Jones Jan 23

how comes the worst tasting nut (walnut) is the best for you ?

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Jordan Elouise Jones Jan 23

i like nuts

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Tek Raj Pant Jan 21

i never liked walnuts, but i will try now

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Michael Panomarenko Jan 17

Can't understand the anti-fat craze. Crappy diet programs like Tony Furgoson/Weight Watchers likely to blame - 100% natural peanut butter and almond spreads are also good

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Magda Arroyo Jan 14

As a vegetarian I eat mixed nuts daily, the ones bought at Costco

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Kayla VanLarken Dec 20, 2010

i ♥ cashewa!!!!!!

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